



Brisbane Sportfishing Club Inc.

PO Box 1022, Foritude Valley, QLD, 4006

www.brisbanesportfishingclub.com.au

Awoonga Dam 25-28 November 2004

by **Jeremy Arnold**

In total, there were 19 club members and guests along for all or part of that time. This included Jon Norling and Emanuel Eliadis (a past president of the BSFC) who arrived the previous Saturday and had to leave on the Friday, and Warren Steptoe and Jon and Nathan Kieboom who arrived on the Saturday, having been at Lake Proserpine the previous few days. Damon and Jim Karydas, Mike Clare and Chris, Roy Lane and Bruce Moss, and Dave Marsh and myself were in the two cabins and Robert and Donna Lawes, Brad Turner and John and Darryl Lund and his brother were camping.



Sunset over Awoonga, and another nights fishing is ready to begin.

We arrived at Awoonga at about 2pm after about 6 hours driving and checked in at the office, which was well stocked with lures all reasonably priced. The cabins were clean, comfortable and air conditioned (and worked out to be \$25 per head per night). I had a bit of a chat to Jon and Emanuel as they had already been at Awoonga for 6 days. They had success earlier in the week with a barra of 115 cm and several others, and described the techniques and lures they were using. We went out at 4

pm and as this was my first time on the dam, we went for a bit of a look around to get a feel for the place and log some marks on the GPS.

There was a fresh E-SE wind keeping things cool and Jon mentioned that the water temp had been falling since he arrived. We did some casting around some of the bays and points, and despite plenty of practice at home, found our skills sadly lacking and spent more time untangling birds nests than working lures. We did some trolling once it got dark, but were back at the ramp at 8pm.

Apparently the morning sessions had not been very productive, and as dawn breaks at around 4 am, we decided to give the morning session a miss. Turned out that Brad had caught a 103 cm barra trolling just on dusk, and Jon and Emanuel had tallied five for the night. After breakfast, we decided to take the boat down to Gladstone to have a poke around rather than sitting in the cabins all day. We found a local tackle shop, and armed with local info and some more lures, we launched into the Calliope for a look. We spend a couple of hours trolling the mangrove banks around the power station hot water outlet and



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the surrounding region for a nice flathead for David and nothing else and were back at the cabin for lunch.



Jim Karydas with his best barra

That afternoon, we were back on the dam by 4 pm again and headed off up Iveragh Ck for a look. Once again, we spent a couple of hours casting lures without a touch and then headed back to the windy side of the dam to troll – and troll we did along rocky points, shallow bays and past stands of timber. One or two touches maybe, but it is difficult for a barra virgin like myself to tell if it was the lure brushing past snags, or half-hearted touches. We worked the area we had decided to fish

over and over until we finally called it a night at 10 pm. Once again, it turned out that some fish had turned up, including an animal which ripped 50 lb braid off a locked up drag on Roy's rod and broke the line at a join. Roy compared it to an amberjack!



Not a photo you would expect to see in a report on Awoonga, but Dave was happy with this flathead he caught in a side outing to the Calliope River.

Damon had also caught a couple of freshwater catfish using 1 kg line in division 9 for points using soft plastics. The catfish schools are given away by the schools of cormorants in the deeper parts of the dam. Anyway, it is good to see club members competing for points, as a bit of friendly competition is good and helps to improve your fishing.

The last night, the pressure was on for at least a hook up. Fortunately the weather had started to improve, with the wind still blowing all day but coming from the NE and warming things up a bit. This time, we decided to explore a bit further up the dam where some of the action had been the previous night. Again I logged a few marks into the GPS as we went, having a few casts here and there.

We started trolling our shallow divers at around 6 pm and at about 9 pm Dave had a bump then a hookup but the hooks pulled after only a few seconds. Within another minute or two, I also had a bump and hookup and a little barra of 48 cm was landed, photographed and released.



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By this time the winds had dropped out completely leaving a still, warm night with the full moon almost directly overhead. Encouraged, we kept trolling around the same area, and



Jeremy's 63cm Barra caught on the last night

an hour later I hooked and landed a second barra of 63 cm. It later weighed 3.9 kg and was taken on 8 kg line. We kept going until around 12.30 that night, and had a few more bumps but no more hookups. Swapping stories the next morning, it turned out that the barra were quite active that night, with Jim and Damon landing 4 from 6 hookups and Bruce and Roy also landing 6, all around 50-60 cm. Darryl also hooked a fish over a meter long which threw the lure on a jump. Unfortunately, we had to leave that day, just as the weather had come good and we felt we were starting to get a feel for the place. Lucky Warren, Jon and

Nathan, who were staying on, and Brad who was on his way to Faust.

It seems there is plenty of interest among those who went on this trip to go back again next year and I am sure that a few others will be keen too.



Above - Jim & Jeremy weighing Jim's Fish

Right - Jeremy's first Barra



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